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***THE CURRICULUM OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGES**

Henry Churchill King has asserted that the college has two fundamental obligations to its students:

“1. The college owes to its students some genetic understanding of the civilization in which they live.

“2. The college should lead its students into some personal sharing of the great intellectual and spiritual achievements of the race.”

This is interpreted by President King to mean some personal sharing in the scientific spirit and method, in the historical spirit, in the philosophic mind, in esthetic appreciation, in the social consciousness, in religious discernment and commitment.

With these high aspirations as a background, the question may fairly be asked: Have the Congregational Colleges already attained, or are they reaching forth unto those things which are before? Preliminary answers may be given based, first, upon the structure of the college curriculum, secondly, the structure of the college community and third, the vocational distribution of the graduates.

It is obvious, of course, that student elections are more vital than college offerings and that the spirit of the community means more than its structure. Nevertheless a beginning must be made with a statement of the structure of the curriculum and the community. Weightier considerations may follow. This article deals with the structure of the curriculum.

The Congregational College Menu.

There is something suggestive of perfection in the number seven. A seven-course dinner, even in these days of declining prices, sounds positively luxurious. Well, seven courses of intellectual pabulum are spread before the students in the median Congregational college. These courses are: English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Latin, Biology, French, Greek. Of course, there are the hors d'oeuvres and the salad with numerous entrees besides these seven courses which make up the piece de resistance or back-bone, so to say. There is no doubt about the Congregational curriculum having back-bone.

But where is this median Congregational College? It is in

*Note.—This is one of a series of studies being made by the Council for various denominational groups.

the mind of our tabulators. It is an imaginary college so located that one-half of the real colleges are on one side of it and one-half on the other side. The sum total of hours offered by every department of every college was ascertained and the "median" found for each department. By this process the median curriculum is constructed and it is found that in twenty-four colleges English is the central subject, immediately supported by Mathematics and Chemistry, these in turn by Latin and Biology, and these again by French and Greek. It is in these seven departments that a student may major in the median Congregational college.

This median college has dropped Philosophy from the traditional curriculum and has added some Science and French. English has assumed the central position. That is a splendid beginning. No better preparation for the socialization of the curriculum could be made but a student must draw upon the minors, of which there are but four, German, Physics, History, Education—or subjects even with fewer hours than eighteen like Bible, Political Science, Sociology, Music, Spanish, if he is to make contact with the full complement of material designed to furnish "some genetic understanding of the civilization in which he lives, and some personal sharing of the intellectual and spiritual achievements of the race."

*It may be said that since these more modern subjects are in the curriculum, the students will inevitably elect them but the answer is that they will get little but the mechanics of a subject, the mere beginnings of which are presented. A student will scarcely learn to feel at home in a subject in which he cannot major.

If again it is objected that the old line subjects have social value, it will be admitted, but the value is inherent rather than obvious and it takes a master like Harper who is said to have taught Hebrew as a series of hair breadth escapes, to bring it out.

Now, of course, if one views the series of colleges from either end rather than from the middle, he gets a different picture. Suppose we step toward the front end of the line. There are some Congregational colleges that have attained—not per-

*Note.—A parallel study of student elections in these same colleges is being made.

haps in Paul's meaning, but—favorable reports from the standardizing agencies. These colleges are Beloit, Carleton, Colorado, Drury, Grinnell, Marietta, Oberlin, Pomona, Ripon, Washburn, *Whitman. We may borrow a term from one of the newer sciences and say that these colleges constitute the *emerged group*. They have achieved a certain freedom because of their resources of plant, endowment, and personnel. How have they used this partial liberty?

They have progressed upon the road toward socialization. They have added to the languages and sciences of the curriculum already described, German and Physics and they have made a still more fully balanced program by raising History and Political Science, Economics and Sociology, Education and Psychology, Home Economics and Philosophy to the dignity of majors. The number of majors has more than doubled. Approximately one-half of them are "cultural" and the other half "social." English remains central in the curriculum and its dominance is enhanced by surrounding it with more modern subject matter. These colleges are true to the traditions of discipline and culture but they go further and stimulate the desire to serve the community and the world. It is interesting to note that even in the median college of the emerged group Biblical Literature is not a major, although some of the colleges of this group have Biblical departments ranked as Class A by the Religious Education Association.

The curriculum of Pomona well illustrates these tendencies. It is nicely balanced as between the individual and social motives, there being seven majors in each group. Music is one of the fourteen majors; Bible becomes a minor. A striking feature of the Pomona curriculum, which is none the less so because typical, is the large amount of elementary and intermediate work offered.

There is a second group of Congregational colleges, two of which, Wheaton and Doane, are accredited by the North Central Association, and all of which are given standing by their own state universities and State Departments of Education. The others in the group are: Fairmount, Fargo, Pacific University and Yankton. All of them are conservative in their offerings.

*Note.—Knox and Middlebury colleges were not included in this investigation but will be included in subsequent ones.

Wheaton announces majors in English, Chemistry, Greek, Mathematics, Biology and Education. A rather limited amount of work is offered by Wheaton in Bible, Economics and Sociology. Yankton has for majors, English, German, Mathematics, Philosophy. Fargo has the distinction of being the only Congregational college with a major in Religious Education.

There are certain other colleges which are as yet less favored in financial resources. In this group are found Kingfisher, Northland, Olivet, Piedmont, Rollins and Tabor. For the most part they are making their stand for recognition upon the traditional platform. Kingfisher, like numerous other colleges, has taken advantage of the state law for the certification of teachers and has admitted Education to the major status; for the rest, she offers English, French, Mathematics and Latin. It is to be noted, however, that twenty-three hours' work is announced in Cookery and eight in Domestic Art.

Most of this last group of institutions do not attempt the laboratory science. Piedmont which has 65 regular college students (plus 24 commercial and 22 special) offers majors in Chemistry and Biology, in five languages, Latin, Greek, German, French and Spanish, and in English, History, Mathematics, Philosophy and Biblical Literature, a total of twelve.

Northland is evidently making a definite effort to meet a special situation. Her curriculum is frankly loco-centric. She has abandoned the traditional combinations and has built a platform from native timbers. She offers three majors only and these are, in order, Agriculture, Biology and English. This experiment will be watched with interest. As affording a sharp contrast it may be said that Berea College also with special environmental conditions, has a fourfold major program made up of Greek, German, Chemistry and Education.

We have consistently spoken of English as the central subject of the curriculum, the keystone of the structure, with the arch stones extending on either side. The description will not be complete without reference to certain flying buttresses, real or ornamental, which surround the main arch.

Every college, except Beloit and Marietta, has music—a conservatory, a "school" (sometimes wrongly so called) or a department. A majority of them have fine arts. Several of them have public speaking; in one or two instances public

speaking was the first disturber of the sacred academic peace. The program is actually set forth in the not very old catalogs—English, Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Philosophy, Oratory. Three colleges, Drury, Washburn and Whitman, have Departments of Home Economics. Carleton, Grinnell and Colorado have Departments of Commerce. More than half of them have summer schools. Extension courses are offered by three. Nearly all of the first group offer work for the M. A. degree.

It is an interesting fact that all the Congregational colleges teach astronomy though none of them offers it as a major. Indeed, the almost invariable appearance of the observatory as the third building to be erected on the campus—following the recitation hall and the dormitory—is a striking symbol of the historically fundamental tenets of Congregational educational philosophy; culture, discipline, unselfish devotion to truth.